Reading Guide 4 – Roseberry and Marx


1. According to Roseberry, what did Marx hope to do with the world other than simply interpret it? (p. 25)

2. According to Roseberry, should Marx’s analysis being considered a “closed” system or “master narrative?” Why or why not? (p. 26)

3. What are the three “thematic areas” that Roseberry addresses in this article? (p. 26)

4. What are people doing at the beginning of Marx’s analysis? (p. 27)

5. Marx and Engels claim that all intellectual and philosophical human problems are actually related to what? (p. 27)

6. For Marx, the human essence is what? (p. 27)

7. As Marx and Engels analyzed human history, what two aspects did they focus on? (p. 28)

8. According to Marx, which comes first: what men do (“men in the flesh”) or what men think about what they do? (p. 29)

9. Based on an analysis provided by Williams, what two types of temporal dimensions does Marx’s writing deal with? What is the difference between these two? (pp. 30-31)

10. How did Marx characterize class relations? (p. 31)

11. What are the two things on which capitalism depends according to Marx? (pp. 31-32)

12. What are commodities according to Marx? What makes one commodity worth more or less relative to another according to Marx? (p. 32)

13. What (or who) benefits from the surplus value produced by “labor?” (p. 33)

14. What two types of values does a commodity have according to Marx? (p. 33)

15. What is a capitalist (or commodity) economy? (p. 33)
16. What type of working conditions have made “work” under capitalism different from “work” in the past? (p. 34)

17. What unique type of commodity does not exist in nature and only occurs under specific social conditions? (p. 35)

18. How might labor be manipulated in order to increase surplus value? (p. 36)

19. What is a “disposable industrial reserve army” according to Marx? Does this tend to increase or decrease the value of labor power? (p. 36)

20. According to Marx, was the state losing or gaining power over time? (pp. 40-41)


Chapter I

1. The history of all human societies is the history of what? (p. 1)

2. What did modern bourgeois society sprout from? What are the two dominant classes of this society (p. 2)

3. What discovery was essential to the establishment of the world market? (p. 2)

4. What is the role of the modern state? (p. 3)

5. The bourgeoisie has created what type of relationship between man and man? Every occupation has been reduced to what by the bourgeoisie?

6. What kind of epidemic occurs under bourgeoisie capitalism that would have seemed an absurdity under previous forms of social production? (p. 5)

7. According to Marx, who will bring about the death of bourgeois society? (p. 6)

8. Over time, what will the proletariat develop into? (p. 8)

9. According to Marx, every human society has been based on what sort of antagonism? (p. 9)

10. What is happening to the social position of the modern laborer according to Marx? (p. 9)
11. What does Marx claim is inevitable? (p. 10)

Chapter II

1. How does Marx define a “communist?” What is their aim? (p. 1)

2. What is the “theory of Communists?” (p. 2)

3. According to Marx, bourgeoisie culture means what for the majority of the population? (p. 4)

4. According to Marx, law (jurisprudence) in capitalist society is a reflection of what? (p. 4)

5. Marx claims that in capitalist society, the children of the proletariat are being transformed into what? (p. 5)

6. Marx claims that the proletariat have no nation (p. 6). Why would he say this? (Hint: who does he say controls the nation? Whose interests are represented in the laws of the nation?)

7. What does Marx claims has been common (or eternal) to all past human ages? (p. 7)

8. According to Marx, once the proletariat has taken power from the bourgeoisie, who will control capital (production)? (p. 7)

9. According to Marx, after the proletariat has taken power, what will eventually happen to political power and why will this happen? (p. 8)

Chapter III

1. According to Marx, what is the fate awaiting the petit bourgeoisie (small business owner)? (p. 2)

2. On pages 2 - 5 Marx criticizes various forms of what he call “reactionary socialism.” These are aimed at reforming capitalism in some way. Why does Marx believe these attempts to reform will fail?

3. According to Marx, why has Conservative or Bourgeoisie Socialism emerged? Is its goal to overthrow the bourgeoisie? (pp. 5-6)

4. This type of socialism claims that the bourgeoisie exists for the benefit of whom? (p. 6)
5. Does Marx believe that the Critical-Utopian Socialists will be able to create new social laws which will end the problems caused by bourgeois capitalism? Does he agree with their perspective that violence can be avoided when trying to create social change? (pp. 6 – 8)

Chapter IV

1. What action does Marx urge all working men to take? (p. 2)